



Faculty of Music

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

SUNDAY AFTERNOON SERIES

Concert Hall, Edward Johnson Building
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26th, 1971
3.00 p.m.

DAVID MANKOVITZ, *viola*
JOHN McKAY, *piano*
GLORIA AGOSTINI, *harp*

PROGRAM

Fantasy Sonata

Arnold Bax

Allegro molto

Allegro moderato

Lento espressivo

Allegro - Allegro moderato

Bax once declared himself "a brazen romantic . . . I have no interest whatever in sound for its own sake or in any modernistic 'isms or factions." This was in 1928, the year in which he composed the Fantasy Sonata. The Celtic revival and Irish literary movement entirely captured the heart of Bax, an Englishman, and the somewhat strict academicism of his earlier work became softened in favour of atmosphere, his chamber works approached epic proportions and his harmony grew rich in chromatic elaborations. A mature work such as this, amply illustrates these characteristics. The Sonata is based on a single recurrent theme appearing in different guises as occasion demands. This cyclic device was also employed in the first four symphonies which were all composed within a few years of the Fantasy Sonata.

The opening movement presents a series of linked episodes, differentiated in tempo, mood and key, containing within themselves graduated moments of climax and repose and going far to explain the title "Fantasy". The cyclical motif is announced by the viola after a few bars of harp introduction. If a key is to be assigned to the work as a whole it is F sharp, but the first movement opens in the Phrygian mode on that note and the last ends in the Myxolydian mode.

A recitative-like passage leads to the second movement, a scherzo, curiously combining Viennese lilt with suggestively "Celtish" modality and folk-like melodies. An emphatic restatement of the cyclical motif and a further recitative link the scherzo to the third movement. This is a rhapsodic *lento*. The harp first presents a rich cantabile melody in the Myxolydian mode derived from the principal motif. Later the viola takes it up and there follows extensive development of isolated elements of the melody before its *pianissimo* recapitulation.

A restatement of the cyclical motif opens the last movement and leads to the finale proper — *Allegro moderato*. The principal subject is again closely derived from the motto and is presented alternately with it before the concluding *maestoso* statement brings the work solidly to a close in the Myxolydian mode on F sharp.

Le Tombeau de Ravel: valse—caprices

Arthur Benjamin

Literary in their origins, the Tombeaux of 16th and 17th century France and Germany were always in the nature of a lament for the death of a deeply respected writer or musician. Ravel's own contribution to the genre "Le Tombeau de Couperin" looks back on a forgotten tradition and subsumes elements of the great harpsichordist's style into Ravel's own idiom. Again in "La Valse" Ravel evokes the lost world of Johann Strauss.

This latter work is clearly the model for Arthur Benjamin's "Tombeau". This is no lament for Ravel, rather a slightly nostalgic evocation of his period and his kaleidoscopic harmonic vocabulary.

The work exists in two versions, the second being for clarinet and piano. Benjamin considered them quite distinct works, neither being a transcription of the other. Indeed the clarinet and viola parts are so idiomatically conceived that it would be impossible to decide which was the original, just as some of Ravel's compositions could equally well be originally orchestral or for piano.

There are six waltzes with an introduction and finale. The impressionistic rumblings of the introduction immediately recall the opening of Ravel's "La Valse". This material returns in the finale. The six waltzes range freely in mood and in the exploitation of various instrumental techniques and it is in passage—work that the two versions of the piece differ most. Though echoes of Ravel are never far away, the work displays Benjamin's own abundant wit, mellow melodic gifts and skilful craftsmanship.

—i n t e r m i s s i o n—

Duo Sonata for Viola and Harp

Seymour Barab

Lento

Presto — Prestissimo

A la valse moderato

Molto marcato e deliberamente

Barab, a cellist as well as a composer, has written a children's opera in addition to a considerable body of chamber music. His interest in childhood is reflected in the Duo Sonata where there is an unmistakeably childlike quality in the thematic material. This afternoon's performance is the Canadian premiere of the work.

A five-note turn on middle C provides a simple but striking opening motif for the first movement. Growing out of this an extended theme announced on the viola provides nearly all the melodic material for the movement. The harp is here assigned an accompanimental role, its writing is ornate and decorative. The instruments are differentiated rhythmically too, a Scottish snap playing a large part in the harp writing but being entirely absent from the viola part.

The subsequent Presto, pervaded by repeated-note ostinati calls for considerable technical aplomb particularly of the harpist. It falls into four sections, the material of the first two being combined in the third which is followed by a *Prestissimo*. In this final section there is a rather free inversion of the first subject. Marked *semplice*, the third movement explores the intrinsically lyrical quality of the viola and various sonorities of the harp, octaves and chords in open positions. Unusual within the piece as a whole are passages where both instruments play in unison. Notable too is Barab's use of such time-tested devices as hemiola, close imitation and simultaneous simple and compound rhythms.

The finale is in rondo form: ABACABA. The A Section is built on a Bach-like theme involving one of Bach's favourite devices, the falling diminished seventh. The B section is in more or less strict canon on the harp, the viola adding variants. The C section displays a double-stopped fanfare-like motif, marked *quasi cadenza*, which moves freely over ostinati on the harp.
(Programme notes by Michael Evans)

Next event: Sunday, October 24th, 1971 — Janet Baker, mezzo-soprano
Sponsored by the Faculty of Music and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

Next Sunday Afternoon Series — November 7th, 1971 Victor Martin,
David Zafer, violins; Terence Helmer, viola; Marcel St-Cyr, cello;
Thomas Monohan, string bass; Pierre Souvairan, piano